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U. S. Department of Agriculture

HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Monday, Sept. 18, 1933.

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SUBJECT: "Cooking Pork." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, U.S.D.A.

As the weather changes, so do the family menus change. In hot weather we prefer to feature fresh vegetables and fruits and light foods generally. As cold weather comes on, the richer, heartier foods have more of a place. We generally prefer light meats for summer. In cold weather hearty meats are welcome. And that reminds me of pork. Fresh pork is one of our most substantial meats and it is especially good in cool and cold weather. In fact, pork makes up about half the meat eaten in the United States.

Yet I'll tell you a sad fact. Many people don't know how to cook pork to make the most of it, to bring out the delicious flavor to hold in the juices and to keep it tender yet well done through and through. Too many pork chops are dry and hard. Too many pork roasts are dried out on the surface, yet not done in the center. If you want to make pork most delicious and also most wholesome, apply a few simple principles when you cook it.

Now here's what the specialists say about cooking fresh pork. They say success depends on regulating the heat so as to cook the meat well right to the center of the piece and at the same time keep the outside from becoming hard and dry. So they advise searing the piece first at high temperature--yes, searing the piece whether it is chops or a roast. And after that, they advise finishing the cooking at a moderate temperature. Never add water in cooking either chops or a roast. Never baste a pork roast. The hams, shoulders and loins all have sufficient fat on the outside to baste the lean meat underneath. Just remember to set your roast fat-side-up in the pan, an open pan and no water in it. Roast at moderate temperature. Then the roast won't dry out; because the fat on top will drip down all during the cooking and do its own basting.

Perhaps you have an oven that you can't change quickly from hot to moderate. You may be using an oil stove or a coal range or an electric oven. If so, then don't try to sear your pork roasts, but keep the oven at moderate temperature (around 350°F.) all the time.

Now about chops. Cooking pork chops is a different matter from cooking lamb chops or cooking beefsteaks. The quick cooking methods like broiling under the direct flame or pan broiling are ideal for lamb and beef but they aren't suitable for pork. Pork chops have to be done through and through. To prevent them from becoming hard and dry, you need to cover them closely after browning and finish the cooking at very moderate heat.

What ever the pork cut you are cooking, the important point to remember is that it needs thorough cooking and that a moderate temperature does this best. Pork must always be served well done. You may like your beef rare. You may even like your lamb chops slightly rare. But never pork. You see, thorough cooking not only gives the best flavor, but it also is necessary for health's sake. Probably you have heard that pork sometimes contains the trichina parasite which, if not destroyed during cooking, may cause illness. Since this organism is killed when heated to 137 degrees F., you have ample margin of safety when the pork is cooked to the well-done stage of 182 degrees F.

What are some of the good fresh pork cuts that you might feature in the menus you plan during the coming season? Well, one is a boned fresh ham or a boned shoulder roast, stuffed with well-seasoned bread crumbs and roasted to a turn. These stuffed roasts are inexpensive and are easy to carve. Also they are attractive served either hot or cold. As a luncheon or supper dish, cold roast pork is excellent in thin slices with a colorful garnish. Since its flavor is as delicate as that of chicken, save every bit of cooked lean pork to make sandwiches, salads, curry, pork chop suey and so on.

Another excellent stuffed pork dish is stuffed thick rib chops cooked with half apples on top. Another is roast stuffed spareribs. That's a recipe I'm planning to give you in about two minutes so get out your pencils.

As for accompaniments for these fresh pork dishes, the specialists suggest some garnish that is both sweet and tart. Glazed apple rings, fried pineapple, candied crabapples are all good with hot pork. So are glazed sweet potatoes. Parsley, watercress and thin slices of lemon are also nice garnishes for this meat.

Time for the Monday economy menu featuring that delicious and very low-cost pork dish- stuffed spareribs. The menu: Stuffed spareribs; Sauerkraut; Candied sweet potatoes; Coffee cake with raisins.

Now are your pencils all ready and at attention? Well, then, as a special treat I'll give you the recipe for roast stuffed spareribs. Ten ingredients:

2 sections of spareribs

1 cup of fine dry bread crumbs

1/4 cup of diced salt pork

1/2 cup of chopped celery

1/2 cup of chopped onion

1/4 cup of chopped parsley

5 tart apples, diced

1/2 cup of sugar

3/4 teaspoon of salt, and

1/8 teaspoon of pepper

Once more. (Repeat.)

Select well-fleshed rib sections that match. Have the breastbone cracked so you can carve between the ribs. Now prepare the stuffing this way: Fry the salt pork until crisp. Then remove the pieces from the skillet. Cook the celery, onion and parsley in the fat for a few minutes. Then remove them. Put the apples into the skillet. Sprinkle them with sugar, cover and cook them until tender. Then remove the lid and continue to cook until the juice evaporates and the pieces of apple are candied. Mix the apples with the crumbs, the crisp salt pork, the cooked vegetables, salt and pepper. Lay one section of the ribs out flat. Sprinkle with salt and pepper and spread with the hot stuffing. Cover with the other section and sew the two together. Now sprinkle the outside with salt and pepper and rub with flour. Lay the stuffed ribs on a rack in an open roasting pan and sear in a hot oven for 20 minutes- or until the meat is lightly browned. Now reduce the temperature to a very moderate heat and cook for about an hour or longer until the meat is tender. Remove the strings before serving the stuffed spareribs on a hot platter.

Tomorrow: "Questions and Answers."

